



# NEWS RELEASE

**Today's Date:** Friday October 14, 2005 -- 05-044

**District:** District 2 - Redding

**Contact:** Michael Mayor

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## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### Caltrans Wants You to Make a Molehill Out of a Mountain

**REDDING** – The California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) District 2 begins a two-week intensive anti-litter media campaign Monday, October 17, 2005. Along with print and radio public service announcements, Caltrans will be placing posters and free travel trash bags at the nine Safety Roadside Rest Areas along Interstate 5.

“There’s a mountain of trash out there, and people need to take responsibility” said Caltrans spokesperson, Michael Mayor. “We want these posters to remind travelers that California is our home, and that this trash doesn’t just disappear. If motorists use the travel trash bags to clean out their cars, then dispose of it properly, it will make a difference”

Statewide Caltrans spends \$40 million on litter removal. Last year in the North State, Caltrans, along with the help of Adopt-A-Highway volunteers, cleared more than 29,000 bags of trash off the 1,750 center line miles of roadway District 2 maintains. “To put that into perspective” said Mayor “that’s 20 dump trucks a week, or more than a thousand a year, and they’re just hauling litter.”

Aside from the cost to remove it, litter affects the environment. Highway litter gets into storm drains. Storm water carries it to rivers and lakes where it can release toxins poisoning marine life and posing health risks for humans.

#### Facts at a Glance:

- The number one litter item found along highways is cigarette butts.
- Caltrans also finds objects such as mattresses, refrigerators, rugs, and ladders, paper (including fast food wrappers, cups and napkins), bottles and cans along highways.
- In California it is a misdemeanor to throw anything from a moving vehicle. The penalty for littering is a \$1,000 fine.
- The projected annual cost to public agencies in California for litter prevention, clean up and disposal is more than \$375 million.
- The Adopt-A-Highway program was established in 1989. There are currently 4,000 groups representing 35,000 participants. More than 15,000 shoulder-miles of highway have been adopted.
- Adopt-A-Highway Program participants pick up nearly 250,000 bags of trash from California’s roadsides.
- Adopt-A-Highway efforts save California taxpayers \$14.5 million each year.

You can make a difference by carrying a trash bag in your car. Make it a habit and dispose of it properly. If you smoke, use the ashtray and empty it every time you stop for gas. Do not leave loose items in the bed of a pickup. Empty containers of motor oil or antifreeze and things like loose trash can easily fly out at high speeds. If hauling items in an open trailer or truck bed, make sure everything is securely tied down and covered.

One of the best ways to help is become an Adopt-A-Highway volunteer. Currently District 2 has 171 available sites for adoption. For more information on Adopt-A-Highway visit <http://www.dot.ca.gov/dist2/adopt-a-highway.htm> or to find an adoption site contact Saedra Wederbrook at 530-225-3277.

Caltrans wants to remind you when you see someone picking up litter on the side of the road, slow down as if it were a Cone Zone.

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**NOTE:** An electronic version of this news release is available on the Internet at the following web address: [http://www.dot.ca.gov/dist2/news\\_releases.htm](http://www.dot.ca.gov/dist2/news_releases.htm)

